

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES Y SAAVEDRA.

NOTWITHSTANDING the value of the precious metals extracted from the American mines, the Spanish exchequer had not been in a satisfactory condition for a long time. War had scourged the kingdom since the conquest by the Moors. Ferdinand and Isabella had indeed dislodged them and their unlucky King Boabdil from their little paradise in Granada and Andalucía, about a century before the poor Don made his first sally; but it was at a dread sacrifice of money and men's lives. Charles V. was engaged in ruinous wars during the greater part of his reign, and Philip II., his successor (unwillingly indeed), was put to trouble and expense while uniting with other Christian powers to prevent the ferocious sultan from bringing all Europe under the Mussulman yoke. The victory of Lepanto, gained by his half-brother, Don John, somewhat crippled the Sublime Porte and the terrible renegade Uchali, but did not prevent the Algerine and other African pirates from doing infinite mischief to all the Christian states bordering the Mediterranean. Ceaselessly they intercepted their merchant vessels, made booty of the freight and slaves of the crew, and obliged all in the rank of merchants or gentlemen

to find heavy ransoms. Now what should have prevented Spain and France and the Italian kingdoms from collecting a large fleet and army at any one time, and battering down the strongholds of these ruthless plunderers, and effectually putting it out of their power to annoy their Christian neighbors? Philip was often urged to co-operate in such a good work, but he preferred to expend time and money, and his subjects' blood and property, on other projects.

An extract from the work mentioned below,* in reference to the state of Spain toward the latter years of Philip II., is well worth transcribing. The author is speaking of Cervantes in prison, some time between 1598 and 1603:

"He distinctly perceived, through the splendor and apparent unity of the Spanish monarchy, a muttering and stormy confusion, a thousand strange and opposed groupings; —politicians who in fact were mere favorites, austere gentlemen mixed with *galant* writers, —grave inquisitors condemning errant Bohemians, applying a barbarous law to barbarous hordes, and cauterizing but not curing wounds. Through this assemblage of contrasts he could see a wide separation between the social classes. Two distinct groups ex-

* Michel de Cervantes, sa Vie, son Temps, son Œuvre Politique et Littéraire. Par Émile Chasles. Paris: Didier et Cie.

isted, not united by any common idea or sympathy—the extra-social world of Gitanos (gipsies), rogues, and mystics, whose lives were independent, and that of the alcaids and corregidores.

"Between these two camps hovered a mixed population so frequently treated of in Spanish letters,—the *alguazil*, the sacristan, the deserter, the refugee, a hybrid people attached to the law or the church, but affiliated to the *hampa* (illegal bond of union) by character, by nature, by origin, or by interest.

"In a country where poverty was every day increasing, necessity threw thousands every day on a career of adventure. It depopulated Spain in exiling to the Indies her best soldiers. It flung away innumerable renegades to the coast of Africa. It decimated that nobility erewhile so valiant, so full of pride and patriotism. Impoverished gentlemen soon formed a large class of honorable paupers. They endured, with a stoicism purely Spanish, the exigencies of honor and poverty, along with the necessity of living and dying useless to their country."

Let pity be awarded to the poor gentleman who took his promenade toothpick in hand, to impress on his world that he had dined. Cervantes had no need to go beyond his family recollections for materials for this sketch:

"Behold the *hidalgo* coming out of his house with unquiet eye. His suspicious humor inclines him to believe that every one knows his shoes are pieced, that perspiration has left marks on his hat, that his cloak is threadbare, and that his stomach is empty. He has taken a draught of water within closed doors, and just come forth displaying his hypocritical toothpick,—dolorous and deceptive exhibition, which has grown into a fashion."

Political principles and social institutions prevalent during the long wars between the Christians and the Moors were still in vigor at the end of the sixteenth century, when the circumstances of the country had undergone a thorough change.

"During the centuries when Spain was struggling against the Arabs, the chief condition of the nationality was the purity of blood and the Christian faith. The Old Christian (*Christiano Viejo*), the irreproachable Castilian alone, could be intrusted with the de-

fense of the soil or the government of the country. And now when the enemy was expelled the usage remained. The *alcaid* (magistrate) did not know the law, perhaps he could not read, but 'he had,' as he said, 'four inches of the fat of an Old Christian on his ribs, and that was sufficient.'"

In the interlude of the Election of the Alcaids of Daganzo, Cervantes specifies the personal gifts sufficient to qualify for the post. An elector proposing Juan Verrouil, thus dwells on his good qualities:

"At all events Juan Verrouil possesses the most delicate discernment. The other day, taking a cup of wine with me, he observed that it smacked of wood, of leather, and of iron. Well, when we got to the bottom of the pitcher, what did we discover but a key fastened by a strap of leather to a piece of wood!

"*Secretary*.—Wonderful ability, rare genius. Such a man might rule Alanis, Cazalla, ay even Esquivias."

Francis de Humillos is considered fit for the magistracy because of his neatness in soling a shoe. Michael Jarret is voted worthy, as he shoots an arrow like any eagle. Peter the Frog knows every word of the ballad of the "Dog of Alva" without missing one, but Humillos stands the examination with rather more credit than the rest; he knows the four prayers, and says them four or five times per week.

The number of wandering gipsies and brigands and thieves of all description was out of all rational proportion with the honest and respectable population. These were united under the *hampa*, and it was a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain information against any delinquent from a brother of the order.

Little is said about the mercantile or manufacturing classes in books connected with the time of Cervantes. Enough is told of the pride, and luxury, and generally perverted tastes of the great, and hints are given of the kind and considerate demeanor of the nobility residing on their estates to their dependents.

Spain is not the only country which for a time has set an extravagant estimate on some books or class of books. Even in our own days and in those of the last generation, have not literary furores prevailed for picturesque banditti, and feudal castles, and caverns, and awful noises in vast and dimly lighted bedchambers, for poetry beckoning its victims to despair and suicide, for novels stamped with the silver fork of high life, and lastly, for those which enlarge on the physiology of forbidden fruit? M. Chasles will pleasantly explain the literary *penchants* of the peninsula two hundred and sixty odd years since :

"We have seen the France of the seventeenth century enthusiastic for the *Astrea* and the *Clelia*,* and the England of the eighteenth assume shield and spear for *Clarissa Harlowe*,† but in 1598 and in Spain, the extraordinary popularity of the *Amadis* resembled a brain fever at which no one dared laugh. One day a certain nobleman coming home found his wife in tears. 'What is the matter? What bad news have you heard?' 'My dear, *Amadis* is dead.' They could not suffer the writers to put their heroes to death. The infant Don Alonzo personally interceded with the author of the Portuguese *Amadis* to rewrite the chapter in which the Signora Briolena was sacrificed. These creatures of the imagination assumed a personal reality among the people of that era in the mind of every one. Every one was convinced that Arthur of Britain would one day return among men. Julian of Castile, who wrote in 1587, affirmed (could we believe him) that when Philip II. espoused Mary of England, he was obliged to reserve the claims of King Arthur, and engage to yield him the throne when he returned. Chivalric fictions became an article of faith. A certain gentleman, Simon de Silveira, swore one day on the Holy Gospel that he held the history of *Amadis de Gaul*‡ for true and certain."

* For information concerning these slow romances and their contemporaries, and the great Honore d'Urfy, see *University Magazine* for February, 1841.

† A school of simple and warm-hearted working-class folk nightly assembled at a forge in Windsor to hear the perilous trials of Pamela read out to them. They watched with unflagging interest her progress through her ticklish trials, and showed their joy in her final triumph by running in a body to the church and ringing the bells.

‡ This first and best of the chivalric romances was composed by Vasco de Lobeira of Oporto, who died in 1493. It was written between 1842 and 1367, and first printed between 1492 and 1503. There is some uncertainty concerning the given dates.

Such were a few characteristics of Spanish life when Cervantes thought of writing his *Don Quixote*. In his numerous works he had it in purpose to improve the state of things in his native country, and to correct this or that abuse, but he obtained no striking success till the publication of this his greatest work. Alas! while it established his character as master in literature, it excited enmities and troubles in abundance.

YOUTH OF CERVANTES.

Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra was born in 1547 at Alcalá de Hénarès. His parents, both of gentle birth, were Rodrigo de Cervantes and Leonor de Cortinas. Their other children born before Michael were Rodrigo, Andrea, and Luisa. His family belonged to the class of impoverished gentlefolk, poor but intensely proud of their descent from one of those hardy mountaineers the Saavedras, who, five centuries before, so heroically defended the northern portion of Spain against the Moors. While the hereditary possessions were growing less and less, the heads of the family would endeavor to compensate for present privations, by relating to their children the noble deeds and the great estates of their ancestors.

Cervantes' paternal roof was probably surrounded by some of the paternal fields, and it is likely that the domestic economy was similar to that described in the first chapter of *Don Quixote*, where translators have still left us at a loss as to the Saturday's fare, *duelos y quebrantos* (griefs and groans), some guessing it to be eggs and bacon; others, a dish of lentils; others, brains fried in oil; others, the giblets of fowl.

Alcalá de Hénarès* was worthy to be the birthplace of Spain's best writer. The archbishops of Toledo owned a palace there, and there the great Cardinal Ximenes, an ex-student of its

* From the Arabic *Al-Cala-d'el-NaAr*, "the chateau by the river."

college, returned when somewhat under a cloud, and prepared his world-famous polyglot Bible in Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin. From the day when the great scholar and statesman made the town his permanent residence, it aimed to become, and did eventually become, the intellectual metropolis of the native country of Cervantes. It possessed a university, nineteen colleges, thirty-eight churches, and works of art in profusion.

Whether debarred by poverty or negligence, the last an unlikely supposition, Cervantes did not graduate in the university of Alcalá or in any other, a circumstance that occasioned him much mortification in his manhood and advanced age. Émile Chasles thus expresses himself on this subject:

"The graduated took their revenge. When Cervantes acquired celebrity they recollected that he had taken no degree. When he sought an employ they applied to him by way of iron brand the epithet, *Ingenio Lego*. 'He is not of ours,' said they; 'he is not a cleric.' The day when he attracted the attention of all Europe their anger was excessive towards the writer who possessed talent without permission, and genius without a diploma. Cervantes gaily replied, that he admired their pedantic learning, their books bristling with quotations, the compliments they paid each other in Greek, their erudition, their marginal notes, their doctors' degrees, but that he himself was naturally lazy, and did not care to search in authors for what he was able to say without them; and finally, that when there is a dull or foolish thing to be expressed, it will do in Spanish as well as in Latin."

He was smarting under the contempt of the learned asses of his day when writing the preface to his *Don Quixote*:

"Alas, the story of *Don Quixote* is as bare as a rush! Ah, if the author could do as others,—cite at the head of the book a litany of authorities in alphabetic order, commencing with Aristotle and ending with Xenophon or Zoilus! But the poor Cervantes can find nothing of all this. There he sits, the paper before him, the pen behind his ear, his elbow on the table, his cheek in his hand, and himself all unable to discover pertinent sentences or ingenious trifles to adorn his subject. Happily a humorous and intelligent friend enters and brings relief. 'Quote,' said he, 'and continue to quote; the

first sentence that comes to hand will answer. "*Pallida mors æquo pede*" is as good as another. Horace will come in well anywhere, and you can even make use of the Holy Scriptures. The giant Goliath or Goliath was a Philistine, whom David the shepherd slew with a stone from a sling in the valley of Terebinthus, as is related in the Book of Kings in the chapter where it is to be found.'"

THE FIRST PLAYS AT WHICH HE ASSISTED

The earliest instructors of our brave romancer and poet were the excellent clergyman Juan Lopez de Hoyos, who took pride and pleasure in expanding the intellects of clear-headed pupils, and the talented strolling actor, Lope de Rueda, who at a time (middle of sixteenth century) when neither Alcalá nor even Madrid could boast a suitably appointed theatre, went from town to town, and amused the inhabitants from his rudely contrived stage. This consisted of a platform of loose planks supported by trestles, and a curtain as respectable as could be afforded, doing duty as permanent scene, and affording a hiding-place behind it to the actors when not performing, and to the few musicians who occasionally chanted some romantic ballad.

Rueda had been in his youth a gold-beater at Seville, whence, finding in himself a strong vocation for the mimetic art, he made his escape, carrying some of the popular satiric stories in his head, and moulding them into farces. His troupe consisted of three or four male actors, one or two occasionally presenting female characters, and these were found sufficient to present a simple story in action, the manager himself being an actor of rare ability. These open air performances took a very strong hold on Cervantes' imagination. An outline is given of one of these acted fables, the precursors of the voluminous repertory furnished some years later by Lope de Vega.

Rueda himself, presenting an old laborer, tired and wet, and carrying a fagot, appears before his door, and calls on his wife, who should have his supper ready. His daughter (represented by

a beardless youth) acquaints him that she is helping a neighbor at her skeins of silk. She is called, and a fierce scolding match ensues, he demanding his supper and vaunting the severity of his labor, she vilifying the fagot he has brought home. By-and-by the discourse falls on a little plantation of olive trees which he has just put down, and the Signora Aguéda de Toruegano forgets her anger in the anticipation of the large profits to accrue from her seedlings :

"*Wife*.—Do you know, my dear, what I've been just thinking? In six or seven years our little plantation will produce four or five fanègues (about fifteen barrels) of olives, and putting down a plant now and again, we shall have a noble field all in full bearing in twenty-five or thirty years.

"*Husband*.—Nothing more likely; it will be a wonder in the neighborhood.

"*Wife*.—I'll gather the fruit, you'll take them to market on the ass, and Meneiguela (the daughter) will sell them; but mind what I tell you, girl! you must not sell them a maravedi less than two reals of Castile the celemin (bushel).

"*Husband*.—Two reals of Castile! O conscience! a real and a half * will be a fair price.

"*Wife*.—Ah, hold your tongue! They are the very best kind—olives of Cordova.

"*Husband*.—Even so, a real and a half is quite enough.

"*Wife*.—Ah, don't bother my head! Daughter, you have heard me; two reals of Castile, no less.

"*Husband*.—Come here, child. What will you ask—the bushel?

"*Daughter*.—Whatever you please, father.

"*Husband*.—Just a real and a half.

"*Daughter*.—Yes, father.

"*Mother*.—Yes, father! Come here to me. How will you sell them the bushel?

"*Daughter*.—Whatever you say, mother.

"*Father*.—I promise you, my lass, two hundred stripes of the stirrup leathers, if you don't mind my directions. Now what'll be the price?

"*Daughter*.—Whatever you like, father.

"*Mother*.—How! Ah, here's for your 'whatever you like.' (*She beats her.*) Take that, and maybe it'll teach you to disobey me.

"*Father*.—Let the child alone.

"*Daughter*.—Ah, mother, mother, don't kill me! (*Cries out; a neighbor enters.*)

* This has been substituted for fifteen deniers, about three farthings, the amount in M. Chasles' version.

"*Neighbor*.—What's this, what's this? Why do you beat the little girl?

"*Wife*.—Ah, sir, it's this wasteall that wants to give away all we have for nothing. He'll put us out of house and home. Olives as large as walnuts!

"*Husband*.—I swear by the bones of my ancestors that they are no bigger than grains of millet.

"*Wife*.—I say they are.

"*Husband*.—I say they're not.

"*Neighbor*.—Will you please, ma'am, to go inside? I undertake to make all right. (*She enters the house.*) Now, my friend, explain this matter. Let us see your olives. If you have twenty fanègues, I will purchase all.

"*Father*.—You don't exactly comprehend. The fact is—do you see?—and to tell the honest truth, the olives are not just in the house, though they are ours.

"*Neighbor*.—No matter. Sure it's easy to get them brought here. I'll buy them at a fair price.

"*Daughter*.—My mother says she must get two reals* the bushel.

"*Neighbor*.—That's rather dear.

"*Father*.—Now isn't it, sir?

"*Daughter*.—My father only asks a real and a half.

"*Neighbor*.—Let us see a sample.

"*Husband*.—Ah, don't ask to talk about it farther. I have to-day put down a small plot of olives. My wife says that within seven or eight years we'll be able to gather four or five fanègues of fruit from them. She is to collect them, I to take them on the ass to market, and our daughter to sell them, and she must not take less than two reals. She says yes, I say no, and that's the whole of it.

"*Neighbor*.—A nice affair, by my faith! The olives are hardly planted, and yet your daughter has been made to cry and roar about them.

"*Daughter*.—Very true indeed, sir, what you say.

"*Father*.—Don't cry any more, Meneiguela. Neighbor, this little body is worth her weight in gold. Go, lay the table, child. You must have an apron out of the very first money I get for the olives.

"*Neighbor*.—Good-by, my friend; go in and be agreeable with your wife.

"*Father*.—Good-by, sir. (*He and his daughter go in.*)

"*Neighbor, alone*.—It must be owned that some things happen here below beyond belief. Ouf! quarrel about olives before they're in existence!"

The reader will easily recognize the

* The Spaniards keep their accounts in piastres, reals, and maravedis, the first-named being worth about 3s. 6d. of our money. Thirty-four maravedis make a real, eight reals a piastre. The real mentioned in the text was probably a piece of eight or piastre.

"Maid with the milking pail" at the bottom of this illustration. Before the production of any of the regular pieces of De Vega, or Calderon, or Alarcon, or Tirso de Molina, the easily pleased folk of country or town were thoroughly satisfied with Rueda's repertory. When the talented stroller died in 1567, he was honored with a costly funeral, and solemnly interred in the cathedral of Cordova. Strange contrast between his posthumous fortune and that of Molière!

The impression made on Cervantes by the performances on Rueda's platform was strong and lasting. He ever retained a high respect for the talent of observation, the native genius and the good sense of Lope de Rueda.

In the preface to his own plays, Cervantes left an inventory of the theatrical properties of the strolling establishments in his youth :

"All the materials of representation were contained in a sack. They were made up of four jackets of sheepskin, laced with gilt leather, four beards, as many wigs, four shepherd's crooks. The comedies consisted of eclogues or colloquies between two or three shepherds and one shepherdess. They prolonged the entertainments by means of interludes, such as that of the *Negress*, the *Ruffian*, the *Fool*, or that of the *Biscayan*,—four personages played by Lope as well as many others, and all with the greatest perfection and the happiest natural ability that can be imagined."

One evening in the old age of Cervantes, the company around him were discussing the living actors and the present condition of the theatre. Among other things they treated of the infancy of the Spanish stage, and the artist who first essayed to make it something better than a platform for tumbling. Cervantes at once brought forward the claims of his early master :

"I remember having seen play the great comedian Lope de Rueda, a man distinguished for his intelligence and his style of acting. He excelled in pastoral poetry. In that department no one then or since has shown himself his superior. Though then a child, and unable to appreciate the merit of his verses, nevertheless when I occasionally repeat some couplets that have remained in my memory, I find that my impression of his ability is correct."

The young admirer of Lope de Rueda exhibited in his temperament and appearance more of the soldier than the poet. With his high forehead, his arched eyebrows, his hair flung behind, his firm-set mouth, he seemed to present little of the imaginative dreamer. However, there was that in the delicate contours of the countenance, in the searching look, in the fire of the large dark eyes, which betrayed the ironical powers of the observant man of genius. No doubt he had the literary instincts somewhat developed by the practical lessons of Rueda, but military aspirations had the ascendant for the time. Though his brother Rodrigo had departed for the war in Flanders, and it seemed as if he was destined to remain at home with his family, fate and inclination were against this arrangement. However, the first step he took in life was not in the direction of the battle-field. An Italian cardinal took him to Rome in quality of secretary. The brave Don John, half-brother of Philip II., was appointed general of the league arming against the Grand Turk at the same time, and the young and ardent Miguel eagerly took arms under him, and was present at the memorable naval engagement of Lepanto. Philip did not enter with much good-will into this strife, and prevented any advantages that might result from the glorious victory by shortly withdrawing his brother from the command of the allied forces of Christendom. The enthusiastic young soldier received three wounds as well as a broken arm in the fight. This was in the year 1571, and until 1575 we find Cervantes attending Don John in his contentions with the Mohammedan powers on the coast of Africa, in which the chivalric commander was hampered by the ill-will of his brother, Philip II. He went into the Low Countries much against his will, and after several victories met a premature death there in 1578, when only thirty-two years old.

In vain Dr. Sosa renounced these honors. They produced witnesses, both Christians and Turks, who swore to having seen him officiating as cardinal or governor."

Cervantes received from his great-souled commander written testimonials of his valiant conduct and moral worth, and sailed for Spain from Naples in the year 1578. On the voyage the vessel was attacked by three Turkish galliots; those who fell not in the engagement were made prisoners, and our hero became the slave of a lame renegade called the "Cripple," in Arabic, Dali Mami.

The Algerians, rigid Mussulmans as they were, killed as few Christians in these attacks as they could. Slaves and ransoms were the cherished objects of their quests, and as soon as could be after the landing in Algiers, the classification was made of "gentles and commons." The captors were cunning in their generation, and this was the process adopted for the enhancement of their live property.

The captive's owner proceeded with wonderful skill to raise the value of his goods. While the slave declared his poverty, and lowered his station in order to lower the terms of his ransom, the master affected to treat his victim with the greatest respect. He gave him almost enough of nourishment, and professed he was ruining himself for the other's advantage through pure deference and good-will; and slipped in a word as to his hopes of being repaid for his outlay. The prisoner might undervalue himself as much as he chose, "he was merely a private soldier." Ah, his master knew better; the man of the ranks was a general, the man before the mast a *caballero*, the simple priest an archbishop.

"As for me," said the captive Dr. Sosa, 'who am but a poor clerk, they made me bishop by their own proper authority, and in plenitudine potestatis. Afterwards they appointed me the private and confidential secretary of the Pope. They assured me that I had been for eight days closeted with His Holiness in a chamber, where we discussed in the most profound secrecy the entire affairs of Christendom. Then they created me cardinal, afterwards governor of Castel Nuovo at Naples; and at this present moment I am confessor to Her Majesty the Queen of Spain.'

The letters of Don John of Austria having been found on Cervantes, the poor soldier of Lepanto became at once a great lord, from whom a large ransom might be expected. They began with genuflexions, and frequently ended with the scourge, not in his case, however. Many poor wretches, to save themselves from the horrible treatment they endured, or expected to endure, became Mohammedans, on which they immediately obtained their liberty, were set on horseback, with fifty Janissaries on foot, serving as cortège, the king defraying the expense of the ceremony, bestowing wives on the hopeful converts, and offering them places among his Janissaries.

Cervantes became the centre, round which the hopes of many poor captives were grouped. He made several attempts at evasion, and, strange to say, was not in any instance punished by his otherwise cruel master.

Several Christians enjoying the benefit of safe conduct were free to come and go among these Algerines, and the Redemptorist Fathers enjoyed thorough freedom, as through them the ransoms were chiefly effected. A Spanish gentleman being set at liberty, carried a letter from our hero home to his family, and in consequence the brave old hidalgo, his father, mortgaged his little estate, took the dowries of his two daughters, and forwarded all to his son for the liberation of himself and his brother, who was also in captivity. When he presented himself to Dali Mami with this sum in his hands the renegade cripple only laughed at him. He and Rodrigo were men of too much importance to be ransomed for so trifling a sum.

The cruel viceroy of Algiers having spent his allotted time in charge of that nest of vultures, was replaced by a governor still more cruel, under whom Cervantes made a desperate effort to escape, and carry off forty or fifty fel-

low-captives with him. He paid his brother's ransom, and he, when set at liberty, managed to send a vessel near the spot where Miguel had his companions in safety in a grotto of a certain garden. Through some mismanagement the descent failed, and the hiding-place was revealed by the treachery of a trusted individual. All were brought before the new Viceroy Hassan, and Cervantes avowed himself the chief and only plotter among them. Hassan used flattery, promises, and threats to induce the intrepid Spaniard to criminate a certain brother Redemptorist as privy to the plot, in order that he might come at a much coveted sum of money which he knew to be in his possession. All was in vain. Cervantes was not to be turned from the path of loyalty, and when every one expected sentence of death to be pronounced on him at the moment, Hassan became suddenly cool, and merely ordered him to be removed.

The bagnio of Hassan was a sufficiently wretched place, but while our hero sojourned there, he made it as cheerful as he could by composing poetical pieces and reciting them, and getting up a Spanish comedy. There were forty priests in it at the time, and these performed their clerical duties as if at liberty. They celebrated mass, administered holy communion, and preached every Sunday. When Christmas approached, he arranged a mystery, such as he had seen performed in his native Alcala under the direction of the ingenious Lope de Rueda. All were prepared,—the shepherds' dresses, the crib, the stable, etc.; the guardian admitting outsiders at a small charge, and a shepherd reciting the opening verses of the entertainment, when a Moor entered in hot haste, and shouted out to all to look to their safety, as the Janissaries were rushing through the streets, and killing the Christians. Some clouds on the northern horizon had been taken for the Christian fleet under Don John, and the terrible guards determined to

put it out of the Christian captives' power to aid the attack. The massacre ceased on the clearing away of the vapors.

About that time, Philip II. was collecting a large naval force in the Mediterranean for the ostensible purpose of storming Algiers, though in reality his intent was merely to seize on the kingdom of Portugal. Its romantic sovereign, Don Sebastian, the hero of one of Miss Porter's romances, had just been slain in Morocco, and his successor Henry, whose days were numbered, was unable to cross his projects. The report of Philip's meditated descent inspired Cervantes with a project of a general rising of the slaves. He even addressed to the sombre king, through his secretary Mateo Vasquez, a remonstrance and encouragement, of which we present a few extracts :

"High and powerful lord, let the wrath of thy soul be enkindled. Here the garrison is numerous, but without strength, without ramparts, without shelter. Every Christian is on the alert; every Mussulman is watching for the appearance of the fleet as the signal for flight. Twenty thousand Christians are in this prison, the key of which is in your hands. We all, with clasped hands, our bended knees, and with stifled sobs, and under severe tortures, beseech thee, puissant lord, to turn your pitying looks towards us, your born subjects, who lie groaning here. Let the work courageously begun by your much loved father be achieved by your hand."

Hassan employed the slaves in building fortifications for his garrison, but he kept Cervantes strictly guarded. "When my disabled Spaniard," said he, "is under guard, I am sure of the city, the prisoners, and the port." But though well watched, the restless captive made three other attempts at escape, for each of which he was to receive, but did not, two thousand bastinadoes. In the fourth attempt, two merchants who were compromised, and feared he might betray them under the torture, offered to pay his ransom, and thus secure his departure, but he did not accept the terms. He braved the examination, and would

not reveal the names of any accomplices except four who were already out of danger. Strange to say, even this time he escaped without punishment. A renegade, Maltrapillo, high in Hassan's confidence, and who seems to have entertained great esteem for the fearless and generous character of Cervantes, probably saved his back sundry stripes on these different occasions. On this subject we quote some lines from M. Chasles :

"Either through the interference of Maltrapillo or the influence exercised by the noble character of Cervantes on all around him, this time again he was spared by Hassan. How was he enabled so many times to escape his master's rage? In following his fortunes through these years of trial, I am struck by the mysterious influence of his noble character on the events and the persons by whom he was surrounded. In the midst of a diverse population incessantly changing, among a crowd of soldiers and captive doctors, he occupied an exceptional station. Brothers of Mercy, Christian merchants, renegades, all recognize in him a moral superiority. 'Every one,' says the eye-witness Pedrosa, 'admired his courage and his disposition.'"

The acts of kindness done by the renegades to the captives were not small nor few. Nearly all of them had conformed through the immediate prospect of promotion, or fear of punishment, and there was scarcely a conscientious Mussulman among every hundred of them. In general they were anxious to obtain from the captives about to be ransomed certificates of their own good offices towards them. These were intended to be available for some possible future contingencies.

The poor sorrowful father continued to make unavailing efforts for his ransom. He even disturbed the court officials with representations of his son's services and sufferings; but "circumlocution" was a word understood even in Madrid and in the days of Philip II. The afflicted and impoverished gentleman died in dragging his suit through the lazy and unpatriotic officials, and if ever a death resulted from heartbreak his was one.

Still his mother, his brother Rodrigo, and his sister Andrea exerted themselves, and dispatched to Algiers 300 crowns. A strong representation at the court insured in addition the amount of a cargo then consigned to Algiers, which produced only sixty ducats, say £30. These sums were not sufficient, and the heart sick captive would have been carried by Hassan to Constantinople, his viceroyalty having expired, only for the deficiency being made up by the Brothers of Mercy, Christian merchants, etc., who were "tightly targed" for that purpose by the good-hearted and zealous brother superior, Gil. This providential redemption occurred in 1580.

Before he quitted his abode of little ease he had the forethought to demand a public scrutiny of his conduct by the Christian authorities. Witnesses in great number came forward to testify to his worth. The following facts were irrevocably established. He had rescued one man from slavery only for the treachery of Blanco. The pure morality of his life was attested by a gentleman of high standing. Others proved his many acts of charity to the unfortunate and to children, all done as secretly as possible. He had contrived the escape of five captives. A gentleman, Don Diego (James) de Benavides, furnished this testimony :

"On coming here from Constantinople, I asked if there were in the city any gentlemen by birth. I was told there was one in particular—a man of honor, noble, virtuous, well-born, the friend of caballeroes, to wit, Michael de Cervantes. I paid him a visit. He shared with me his chamber, his clothes, his money. In him I have found a father and a mother."

The declarations of Brother Gil and of Rev. Dr. Sosa solemnly confirmed the facts brought forward by numerous captives. Sosa wrote his declaration while still in irons, and avowed with a mixture of dignity and feeling that his principles would have prevented him from allowing himself such inti-

macy with Cervantes, had he not considered him in the light of an earnest Christian, liable to martyrdom at any moment.

A scrutiny was also made in Spain at the request of the elder Cervantes, in 1578, and both the justifying documents, signed by notaries, are still in existence.

"Ah!" says Haedo (himself an eye-witness of the sufferings of the Christians in that vulture's nest), "it had been a fortunate thing for the Christians if Michael Cervantes had not been betrayed by his own companions. He kept up the courage and hopes of the captives at the risk of his own life, which he imperilled four times. He was threatened with death by impaling, by hanging, and by burning alive; and dared all to restore his fellow-sufferers to liberty. If his courage, his ability, his plans, had been seconded by fortune, Algiers at this day would belong to us, for he aimed at nothing less."

Cervantes did not put his own adventures in writing. The captive in Don Quixote said with reference to them, "I might indeed tell you some strange things done by a soldier named Saavedra. They would interest and surprise you, but to return to my own story." The disinterested hero had more at heart the downfall of Islamism than his own glorification.

HIS RESTORATION TO HIS NATIVE LAND.

Cervantes touched his native land again with no very brilliant prospect before him. His father was dead; his mother could barely support herself, his brother was with the army, and his friends dispersed. Still the first step on his beloved Spain gave him great joy, afterwards expressed through the mouth of the captive in Don Quixote:

"We went down on our knees and kissed our native soil, and then with eyes bathed in tears of sweet emotion we gave thanks to God. The sight of our Spanish land made us forget all our troubles and sufferings. It seemed as if they had been endured by others than ourselves, so sweet it is to recover lost liberty."

At the time of his arrival king and court were at Badajos, watching the progress of the annexation of Portugal. He joined the army, and during the years 1581, '2, '3, shared in the battles between Philip and the Prior Antonio de Ocrato, the latter being assisted by the French and English. In one of these fights the Spanish admiral ordered the brave Strozzi, wounded and a prisoner, to be flung into the sea. At the engagement of the Azores, Rodrigo Cervantes and another captain flung themselves into the sea, and were the first to scale the fortifications, thus giving their soldiers a noble example.

MARRIAGE AND SUBSEQUENT TROUBLES.

He lived in Lisbon a short time and composed his *Galatea* there. Next year he returned to Madrid, and married the lady Dona Catalina de Palacios y Salazar y Vomediano. She was of a noble family, but her dowry consisted of a few acres of land. In the marriage contract, signed in presence of Master Alonzo de Aguilera, and still in existence, mention is made of half a dozen fowl forming part of the fortune brought by her to the soldier and poet. The marriage was celebrated 12th December, 1584, at the bride's residence, Esquivias, a little town in the neighborhood of the capital.

He now betook himself seriously to literature, published the *Galatea*, and began to write for the theater. At first he was very successful, but on a sudden Lope de Vega came on the scene, and exhibited such dramatic aptitude and genius and mental fertility, that managers and actors and audience had no ears for any other aspirant to dramatic reputation, and poor Cervantes found his prospect of fame and independence all at once clouded. The pride of the Spanish hidalgo and "Old Christian"* had been much

* One unsuspected of having Moorish or Jewish blood in his veins.

modified by his life in the army and bagnio, and his good common sense told him that it was his duty to seek to support his family by some civil occupation rather than indulge his family pride, and suffer them and himself to starve.

But oh, Apollo and his nine blue stockings! what was the occupation dropped over our soldier-poet's head, and doing all in its power to extinguish his imaginative and poetic faculties? Nothing more nor less than the anti-romantic duties of a commissary. Well, well, Spain was no more prosaic than other countries, and Cervantes had brothers in his mechanical occupations. Charles Lamb's days were spent in adding up columns of "long tots." Burns gauged whiskey casks and kept an eye on private stills; Shakespeare adjusted the contentions of actors, and saw that their exits and entrances did not occur at the wrong sides; perhaps the life of the mill-slave Plautus furnished as much happiness as any of the others. The mill-stones got an occasional rest, and he was in enjoyment for the time, when reading comic scenes from his tablets or scrolls, and listening to the outbursts of laughter that came from the open throats of his sister and brother drudges.

The Invincible Armada, while preparing to make a hearty meal on England, had need meantime of provender while crossing the rough Biscayan sea, and four commissaries were appointed to collect provisions for that great monster, and for the behoof of the Indian fleets. Cervantes was one of the four, Seville appointed his headquarters, and his time most unpoetically employed collecting imposts in kind from all tax-paying folk.

The regular clergy (houses of friars and monks) were at the time at deadly feud with his Most Catholic Majesty, Philip II., and refused to pay him tribute. They founded their refusal on a papal bull; and on the other side, the alcalds produced the royal warrant. Between the contending

powers the author of *Galatea* found himself sufficiently embarrassed.

For some years Cervantes endured a troubled and wretched existence in such employment as the above, in purchasing corn for the use of the galleys, and in making trips to Morocco on public business. He solicited the government for an office in the Indies, and was on the point of obtaining it when some influence now unknown frustrated his hopes. He describes his condition and that of many other footballs of fortune in the *Jealous Estremaduran*:

"In the great city of Seville he found opportunities of spending the little he had left. Finding himself destitute of money, and not better provided with friends, he tried the means adopted by all the idle hangers-on in that city, namely, a passage to the Indies, the refuge of the outcasts of Europe, the sanctuary of bankrupts, the inviolable asylum of homicides, paradise of gamblers who are there sure to gain, resort of women of loose lives, where the many have a prospect, and the few a subsistence."

Our poet not being born with an instinct for regular accounts and being charged to collect arrears of tax in Granada to the amount of two millions of maravedis, say £1,500, found his task difficult among people who were slow in committing to memory the rights of the crown. His greatest mistake was the intrusting of a considerable sum to a merchant named Simon Freire de Luna in order to be deposited in the treasury at Madrid. Simon became bankrupt, and Cervantes was cast into prison for the deficiency in his accounts. He was soon set at liberty, but the different appearances he was obliged to make before the courts of Seville, Madrid, and Valladolid were sufficient to turn his hair grey before its time. The judges reproached him for his deficit, the people gave him no praise. The alcalds of Argamasilla in La Mancha gave him particularly bad treatment. Perhaps he recollected it when writing his romance.

Subjected to the interrogatories of the royal councillors, judges, and even

alcalds, a servant to all merely for means to live, and always moving about, poor Cervantes appears at last to have given way. From 1594, when sent to collect arrears in Granada, to 1598, little can be gathered concerning him, but from this last date till 1603 nothing whatever is known of his fortunes. The probability is that he spent part of the time in a prison of Andalusia or La Mancha, and there meditated on the vanity of human expectations, and wrote the first part of Don Quixote.

HIS LITERARY LIFE.

Wherever he spent this interval his brain had not been idle—he had passed in review the defects of the Spanish government and of the Spanish character. He had been unable to rouse the king to crush the power of the Algerine pirates, either by the memorials he had consigned to his friend the secretary, or by the vigorous pictures he had presented on the stage (after his return from captivity) of the cruelties inflicted by them on their unhappy captives. He had failed in his great and cherished object, but there remained one reformation yet to be made, namely, of taste among those Spaniards, ladies and gentlemen, to whom reading was a pleasure, and who could afford to purchase books. To substitute a relish for healthier studies was a darling object of our much worried poet for years. It was cherished in prisons, and the first part of his great work written, or nearly so, at the time when we find him again mixing with society in Valladolid, where Philip III. held his court. This was in the year 1603. The following extract concerning his residence and his mode of life in that city, is taken from the work of M. Chasles:

"There is at Valladolid a poor looking house, narrow and low, hemmed in among the taverns of a suburb, and near the deep and empty bed of a torrent called Esgueva. There Cervantes came to live in 1603, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. With an emotion which I cannot express I have visited this

dwelling, which stands outside the city, and which remains unmarked by stone or inscription. A well-used staircase conducts to the two modest chambers used by Cervantes. One, in which he slept, no doubt, is a square room with a low ceiling supported by beams. The other, a sort of ill-lighted kitchen looking on to the neighboring roofs, still holds his *cantarelo* or stone with three round hollows to hold water jars. Here lived with him his wife, Dona Catalina, his daughter Isabelle, now twenty years old, his sister Dona Andrea, his niece Constanza, and a relation named Dona Magdalena. A housekeeper increased the family. Where did all sleep? However that was arranged, they all did their work together. The ladies earned money by embroidering the court-dresses. Valladolid, adopted for abode by the new king and by the Duke of Lerma, was then incumbered, as was Versailles afterwards, with gentlemen, with the grandees, and with generals. Our impoverished family was supported by this affluence. The Marquis of Villafraanca, returning from Algiers to the court, got his gala-suit made by the family of the soldier-poet, with whom he had erewhile been acquainted. Cervantes was occupied either with keeping the books of people in business, or regulating the accounts of some people of quality, or striving to bring his long lawsuit with the government to a close.

"In the evening, while the needles of the women flew through the stuffs, he held the pen, and on the corner of the table he put his thoughts in writing. There it was he composed the prologue of that work which had been a labor of love in the composition, and in which he employed all the force of his genius. In bringing it with him to Valladolid, he experienced alternations of hope and fear, being fully sensible that it was his masterpiece. 'Idle reader,' said he in the first page, 'you may credit my word, for I have no need to take oath, that I wish this book, child of my brain, were the most beautiful, the most brilliant, and the most witty that any one could imagine.' He had published nothing since the *Galatea*, which had appeared twenty years before and was an amiable apology for the taste of the times. The book about to be printed was a flagrant attack on the same literature."

Those who despise the old books of chivalry, and have probably never opened one, are too ready to undervalue Cervantes' apprehension about bringing out his book, and the service it eventually rendered to society and literature. We recommend an indifferent individual of this way of thinking to peruse about the eighth of the contents of one of the con-

demned volumes of Don Quixote's library, and work himself into the conviction that the body of the Spanish readers of 1603, ladies and gentlemen, not only admired such compositions more than living readers admire the most popular writings of our times, but in many instances believed the contents to be true.

Let us hope that there is some mistake about the non-accommodation afforded to the seven individuals of Cervantes' family, six of whom were of gentle blood. It is easy to imagine what delightful evenings they would have enjoyed if tolerably comfortable with regard to furniture and space, the soldier-poet reading out some passages from the *Don*, or the Exemplary Novels, or one of his plays, and the well-bred women plying their needles, listening with interest, and occasionally breaking out into silvery laughs at the comic misfortunes of the knight, or the naive pieces of roguery of the squire.

We can readily imagine the desolation of Cervantes' spirit during the troubled years of his official wanderings, his superiors urging him to grind the faces of his countrymen and fellow-subjects, and these entertaining most unfriendly feelings towards himself. The ladies of his family—where were they during this nomadic life of his, and how were they situated? Separation from their society and anxiety about their privations must have added much to the present suffering, and forebodings of things still worse, the companions of his lonely hours.

A pleasant interruption to the monotony and privations of the family life must have been the appearance of the first part of the *Don* in 1604, and the popularity it soon attained.

HIS LABORS AND THEIR REQUITAL.

Some who merely neglected the author till found by fame, were soon ready to do him disservice by passing censure on the execution of the great

work, and even searching for subjects of blame in his past career. Lope de Vega, as we have seen, had put it out of his power to turn his dramatic talents to account. Further, he did not act in a kind manner towards him in private, though outwardly friendly. But Lope's friends and admirers so deeply resented an honest and judicious criticism on the works of the prolific dramatist by Cervantes, that they ceased not during the remaining dozen years of his life to do him every unfriendly act in their power. One was so full of malice and so unprincipled, that towards the end of Cervantes' life he wrote a second part of the *Adventures of Don Quixote*, distinguished by coarseness, dullness, and inability to make the personages of the first part of the story act and speak in character. The impudent and talentless writer called himself Don Avellaneda of some town in La Mancha, but one of De Vega's admirers was supposed to be the real culprit. Suspicions fell on several, but the greater number centred in Pere Luis de Aliaga, a favorite of the Duke of Lerma, and the confessor of Philip III. He was tall, meagre, and dark-complexioned, and had got the sobriquet of *Sancho Panza* by antithesis.

The wretched attack, for it was no better, was published in 1614, two years before the death of Cervantes. Though suffering from illness, and overshadowed by the expectation of approaching death, the appearance of the impudent and worthless production acted on him as the bugle on the nerves of the old battle-steed. In the order of Providence good is extracted from mere human evil, and to the false Avellaneda the world is indirectly indebted for the second part of *Don Quixote*, the wedding of Gamacho, the wise though unsuccessful government of Barataria by Sancho, the disenchantment of Dulcinea, and all the delightful adventures and conferences that had place at the ducal chateau, province unknown.

But between the publishing of the first part of *Don Quixote* in 1605, and the second in 1614, how had the great heart and head been occupied? Probably with little pleasure to himself. On his return from the wars of Portugal in 1584, he had the pleasure and profit of seeing several of his plays acted, some expressly written to direct public spirit towards a crusade on the Algerines.* Of these he thus speaks in the prologue to his dramatic works, published 1613 :

"In all the playhouses of Madrid were acted some plays of my composing, such as the *Humors of Algiers*, the *Destruction of Numantia*, and the *Naval Battle*, wherein I took the liberty of reducing plays to three acts which before consisted of five. I showed, or, to speak better, I was the first that represented the imaginations and secret thoughts of the soul, exhibiting moral characters to public view to the entire satisfaction of the audience. I composed at that time thirty plays at least, all of which were acted without anybody's interrupting the players by flinging cucumbers or any other trash at them. They ran their race without any hissing, cat-calling, or any other disorder. But happening to be taken up with other things, I laid aside play-writing, and then came on that prodigy of nature, that marvellous man, the great *Lope de Vega*, who raised himself to be supreme monarch of the stage. He subdued all the players, and made them obedient to his will. He filled the world with theatrical pieces, finely and happily devised, and full of good sense, and so numerous that they take up above ten thousand sheets of paper all of his own writing, and, which is a most wonderful thing to relate, he saw them all acted or at least had the satisfaction to hear they were all acted."

Good-hearted, generous Cervantes, who could so dwell on that success in a rival which condemned himself to the wretched life of an inland revenue officer, to the hatred of non-payers of tax, to prosecutions, and to

* Between the days of *Lope de Rueda* and those of Cervantes' debut, *Naharra* of Toledo had made considerable improvements in the mechanics of the art. The sack was rejected, and chests and trunks held the properties. The musicians came from behind their blanket, and faced their customers. He rejected the beards except in the case of disguisements, and invented or adopted thunder, lightning, clouds, challenges, and fights. He himself was a capital personator of cowardly bullies.

the discomforts of an Andalusian or Manchegan dungeon, and separation from his niece, sister, daughter, and wife, whom, in absence of data to the contrary, we take to be amiable and affectionate women.

When the court returned to Madrid he and his family followed it, but we find no employment given by him to the printing presses of that city from 1604 to 1613, when he got published the collection of plays and interludes before mentioned. In the same year he published his twelve *Exemplary Novels*,* dedicating them to his patron, *Don Pedro Fernandez de Castro*, count of *Lemos*. This nobleman, in conjunction with *Archbishop Sandoval*, and the actor, *Pedro de Morales*, had succeeded (let us hope) in cheering the poet's latter years. In the preface he gives a portrait of himself in his sixty-sixth year, distinguished by his own charming style, always redolent of resignation, goodwill, and good-nature. He pretends that a friend was to have got his portrait engraved to serve as frontispiece, but, owing to his negligence, he himself is obliged to supply one in pen and ink :

"My friend might have written under the portrait—This person whom you see here, with an oval visage, chestnut hair, smooth open forehead, lively eyes, a hooked but well-proportioned nose, a silvery beard that, twenty years ago, was golden, large moustaches, a small mouth, teeth not much to speak of, for he has but six, all in bad condition and worse placed, no two of them corresponding to each other ; a figure between the two extremes, neither tall nor short, a vivid complexion, rather fair than dark, somewhat stooped in the shoulders, and not very light-footed : this I say is the author of *Galatea*, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, . . . commonly called *Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*. He was for many years a soldier, and for five years and a half in captivity, where he learned to have patience in adversity. He lost his left hand by a musket-shot in the battle of *Lepanto*, and ugly as this wound may appear, he regards it as beautiful, having received it

* The *Lady Cornelia*, *Rinconete* and *Cortadillo*, *Doctor Glass-case*, the *Deceitful Marriage*, the *Dialogue of the Dogs Scipio* and *Berganza*, the *Little Gipsy Girl*, the *Generous Lover*, the *Spanish-English Lady*, the *Force of Blood*, the *Jealous Estremaduran*, the *Illustrious Scullery-Maid*, and the *Two Damsels*.

on the most memorable and sublime occasion which past times have ever seen, or future times can hope to equal, fighting under the victorious banners of the son of that thunderbolt of war, Charles V. of blessed memory. Should the friend of whom I complain have no more to say of me than this, I would myself have composed a couple of dozen of eulogiums, and communicated them to him in secret," etc.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

Cervantes' Voyage to Parnassus, in which he complains to Apollo for not being furnished even with a stool in that poets' elysium, was published in 1614, the second part of Don Quixote in 1615, and that was the last book whose proofs he had the pleasure to correct. He was employed on his Troubles of Persiles and Sigismunda,* and wrote its preface, and the dedication to his patron the Count of Lemos, while suffering under his final complaint, the dropsy, and having only a few days to live. From the preface to the Persiles he appears to have received extreme unction before the last word of it was written. From the forgiving, and patient, and tranquil spirit of his writing, even when annoyed by much unkindness and injustice on the part of the Madrid coteries, from the spirit of religion and morality that pervades his writings, and the care he appears to have taken to meet his summons as a sincere Christian, we may reasonably hope that his sorrows and troubles for time and eternity ended on 23d April, 1616 the day on which a kindred spirit breathed his last at Stratford-on-Avon.

And indeed in our meditations on the characteristics of the author and man in Cervantes, we have always mentally associated him with Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott. We find in all the same versatility of genius, the same grasp and breadth of intellect, the same gifts of genial humor,

and the same largeness of sympathy. The life of Cervantes will be always an interesting and edifying study in connexion with the literature and the great events of his time. We find him conscientiously doing his duty in every phase of his diversified existence, and effecting all the good in his power. When he feels the need of filling a very disagreeable office in order to afford necessary support to his family, he bends the stubborn pride of the hidalgo to his irksome duties—and it is not easy for us to realize the rigidity of that quality which he inherited by birth, and which became a second nature in every gentleman of his nation. In advanced years he still vigorously exerts his faculties, and endures privations and disappointments in a resigned and patient spirit; and when complaints are wrung from him they are neither bitter nor ill-natured. Even his harmless vanity has something amiable and cordial about it. When he has just reached his sixtieth year he effects a salutary revolution in the corrupt literary taste of his countrymen and countrywomen, and save a few coarse expressions inseparable from the literature of his day, a death-bed examination would have found few passages in his numerous writings which it would be desirable to find omitted. He closed an anxious and industrious life by a Christian death.

NOTE.

Towards the end of Cervantes' life he belonged to the third order of Trinitarian monks, and was buried in their church with his face uncovered. These brothers having quitted their convent in 1633, the site of the interment could not be discovered when a search was afterwards made. The house he occupied in Madrid being pulled down about twenty years since, his bust has been placed in a niche in front of the new building.

* It was published by his widow, Dona Catalina, in 1617.